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BRINGING EDUCATION AND UNDERSTANDING TO YOU



NASOPHARYNGEAL *Cancer*

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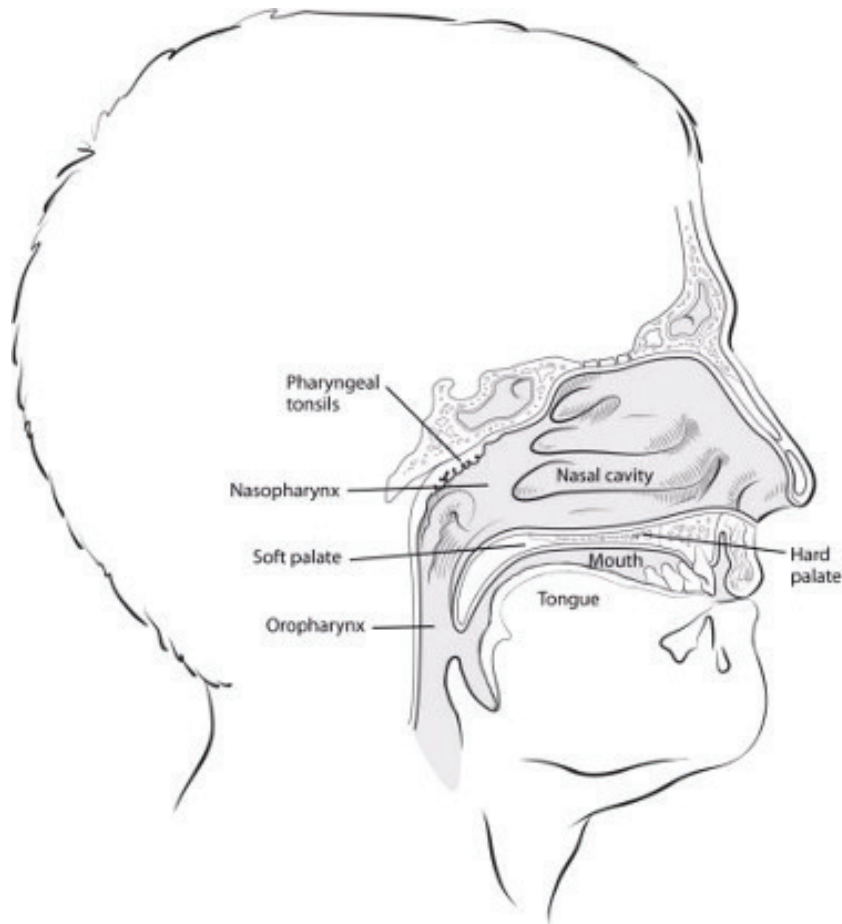
How do I protect myself from nasopharyngeal cancer?

08

How do I protect myself from cancer in general?

I What is nasopharyngeal cancer?

- **Nasopharyngeal cancer (NPC)** occurs when cells in the **nasopharynx** grow out of control and start changing in an abnormal way.¹



- The **nasopharynx** is the upper part of the throat (pharynx). It lies behind the nose and the nasal cavity, right above the soft part of the roof of the mouth (soft palate).¹



References:

1. American Cancer Society. What is nasopharyngeal cancer? [Internet]. 2022 Aug 1 [cited on 2022 Oct 31]. Available from: <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/nasopharyngeal-cancer/about/what-is-nasopharyngeal-cancer.html>

I How common is nasopharyngeal cancer?

Nasopharyngeal cancer is the number

5

most common cancer among Malaysians.²

About **7** out of **10** nasopharyngeal cancer cases in Malaysia were **diagnosed late in stage 3 and stage 4** between 2012 and 2016, making it difficult for effective treatment.²



People whose nasopharyngeal cancer are detected in

Stage **1** and **2** have a **64%** and **59%**
five-year survival rate*³

Stage **3** and **4** have a **50%** and **27%**
five-year survival rate*³

*The percentage of patients who are alive 5 years after diagnosis.

The sooner the cancer is detected, the higher your chances of survival.

References:

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3. National Cancer Registry, National Cancer Institute, Ministry of Health Malaysia (2018). Malaysian Study on Cancer Survival (MySCan).

I Who is at risk of nasopharyngeal cancer?



References:

4. Malaysia Health Technology Assessment Section. CPG Management of Nasopharyngeal Carcinoma. Putrajaya: Ministry of Health Malaysia; 2016 June. 40p. Report No: 3

5. American Cancer Society. Risk Factors for Nasopharyngeal Cancer [Internet]. 2022 Aug [cited on 2022 Oct 31]. Available from: <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/nasopharyngeal-cancer/causes-risks-prevention/risk-factors.html>

6. Chen Y, Chang ET, Liu Q, Cai Y, Zhang Z, Chen G, Huang QH, Xie SH, Cao SM, Jia WH, Zheng Y. Occupational exposures and risk of nasopharyngeal carcinoma in a high-risk area: A population-based case-control study. *Cancer*. 2021 Aug 1;127(15):2724-35.

I What are the signs and symptoms of nasopharyngeal cancer?

Signs and symptoms of nasopharyngeal cancer^{7,8}



Nasal congestion



Bloody discharge from nose



Blood in your phlegm or saliva



A painless lump in your neck (on one or both sides)

The difference between signs and symptoms:

Signs are what others see (e.g. swelling and bleeding),
symptoms are what you feel (e.g. headache and pain).⁸

TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR IF YOU NOTICE ANY OF THESE CHANGES

References:

7. American Cancer Society. Signs and Symptoms of Nasopharyngeal Cancer [Internet]. 2022 Aug 1 [cited on 2022 Dec 30]. Available from: <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/nasopharyngeal-cancer/detection-diagnosis-staging/signs-and-symptoms.html>

8. American Cancer Society. Signs and Symptoms of Cancer [Internet]. 2020 Nov 6 [cited on 2022 Dec 28]. Available from: <https://www.cancer.org/treatment/understanding-your-diagnosis/signs-and-symptoms-of-cancer.html>

I What are the signs and symptoms of nasopharyngeal cancer? (continued)

Signs and symptoms of nasopharyngeal cancer^{7,8}



Hearing loss, ringing,
a feeling of fullness in
one or both ears



Headache



Double vision



Facial numbness
or pain

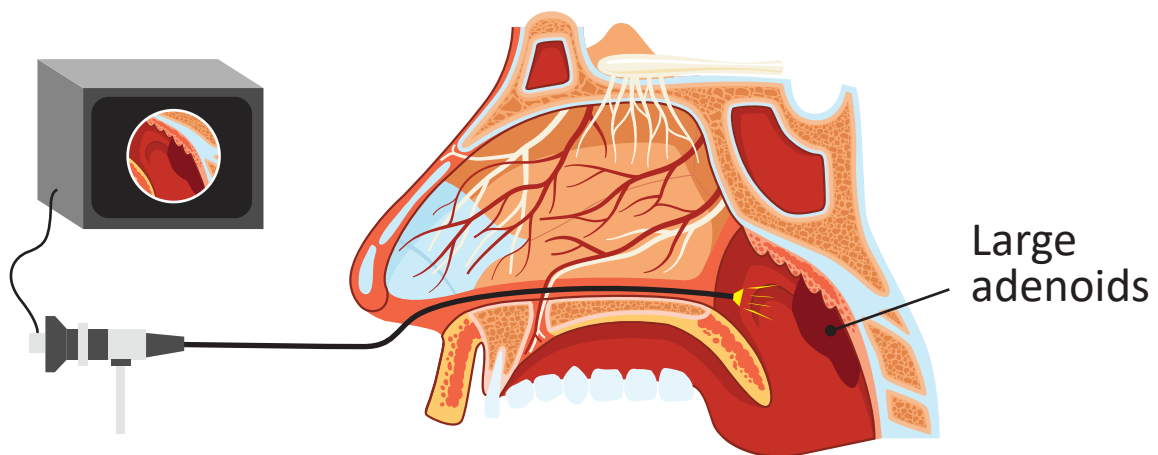
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TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR IF YOU NOTICE ANY OF THESE CHANGES

I How do I find out if I have nasopharyngeal cancer?

- Nasopharyngeal cancer can be detected early using the tests listed below. These tests, through different techniques, look for abnormal changes.



1. Nasendoscopy

- The doctor scans the internal part of your nose, throat, and voice box using a thin flexible tube called a **nasendoscope**.⁹
- This tube is fitted with a **camera** and has a **light** on one end that allows the doctor to see anything unusual.
- The scope is inserted into your nose, passing the back of your throat to your voice box.

2. Biopsy

- If there is an abnormal growth seen on nasendoscopy, the doctor will proceed with a biopsy.¹⁰
- Biopsy:** the doctor will insert a needle into the growth and remove some tissue sample from it. This sample will then be sent to a laboratory.
- With this procedure, the doctor can confirm the diagnosis of nasopharyngeal cancer.

BASED ON THE RESULTS, YOUR DOCTOR WILL ADVISE ON THE NEXT STEPS

References:

9. Cancer Research UK. Nasendoscopy for nasopharyngeal cancer [Internet]. 2021 Oct 13 [cited on 2022 Oct 31]. Available from: <https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/nasopharyngeal-cancer/getting-diagnosed/tests/nasoendoscopy>

10. American Cancer Society. Tests for Nasopharyngeal Cancer [Internet]. 2022 Aug [cited on 2022 Oct 31]. Available from: <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/nasopharyngeal-cancer/detection-diagnosis-staging/how-diagnosed.html>

I How do I protect myself from nasopharyngeal cancer?



Limit salted or cured foods in your diet¹¹

The risk of NPC is higher among people who eat salt-cured fish and meat regularly.



Get the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine¹¹

The HPV vaccine protects you against certain types of viruses that cause nasopharyngeal cancer.



Don't smoke¹¹

Avoid active and passive smoking completely.



Don't drink alcohol¹¹

Avoid alcohol completely.

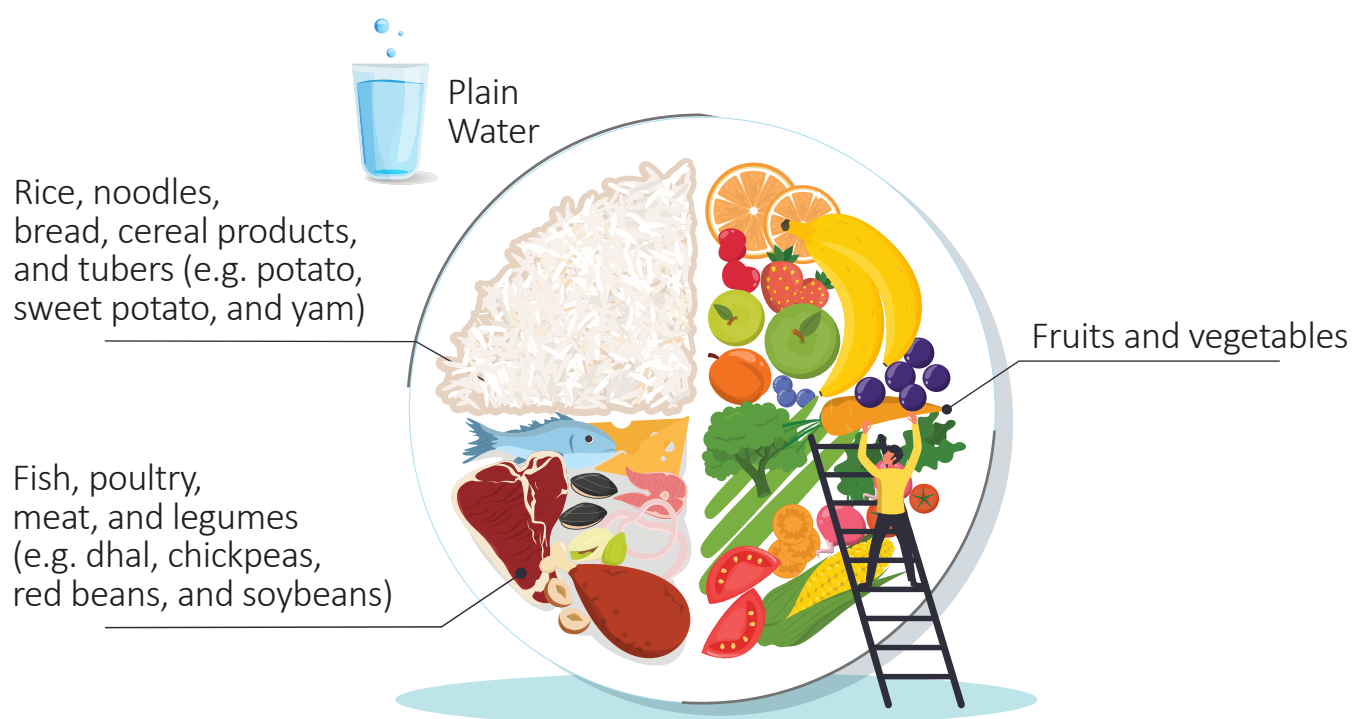
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11. American Cancer Society. Can Nasopharyngeal Cancer Be Prevented? [Internet]. 2021 Aug [cited on 2022 Oct 31]. Available from: <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/nasopharyngeal-cancer/causes-risks-prevention/prevention.html>

I How do I protect myself from cancer in general?

Eat Healthy

The diagram below shows the Malaysian Healthy Plate with Quarter Quarter Half concept. Use this as a visual guide to healthy, balanced meals.¹²



Recommendation for the following food products:

	Red meat	Less than 500g/week = 3 palm sizes of meat in total ¹³		2 servings of fruits and 3 servings of vegetables daily¹³	E.g., eat 1 apple + 1 slice watermelon + 12 tablespoons of cooked leafy vegetables/day
	Processed meat	Avoid completely ¹³		Sugar sweetened drinks	Avoid completely ¹³
	More than 2 servings of wholegrain daily¹³	E.g., eat at least 2 slices brown bread + 0.5 cup cooked brown rice/day		Processed foods	Less than once a week or avoid completely ¹³

References:

12. Panduan Pinggan Sihat Malaysia. Putrajaya (MY). Ministry of Health Malaysia; 2016. 50 p. Report No.: 1.

13. World Cancer Research Fund/American Institute for Cancer Research. "Continuous Update Project Expert Report 2018.

Recommendations and public health and policy implications." [Internet]. [cited on 2022 Nov 17]. Available from: dietandcancerreport.org

I How do I protect myself from cancer in general? (continued)

Be Active



150 Minutes

Moderate-intensity* aerobic activity per week¹⁴

Brisk walking, jogging, swimming, tennis (doubles), cycling, hiking, line dancing

or



75 Minutes

Vigorous-intensity** aerobic activity per week¹⁴

Running, swimming laps, tennis (singles), jumping rope, aerobic dance, kickboxing

and



At least 2 days

of muscle strengthening activities per week¹⁴

Use of exercise bands, weight machines, or hand-held weights; push-ups, pull-ups, planks, squats, lunges, some yoga postures and tai chi

How do you measure intensity?

Use the 'talk test'

*Moderate-intensity exercise	Moderate effort required. You breathe harder, you start to sweat, and you will talk more slowly than you do normally. ¹⁵
**Vigorous-intensity exercise	High effort required. You are puffing, sweating, and can only talk with pauses. ¹⁵

References:

14. World Health Organization. Physical Activity [Internet]. [cited on 2022 Nov 17]. Available from: <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/physical-activity>

15. Cancer Council Australia. "Exercise for people living with cancer" [Internet]. 2019. [cited on 2022 Nov 17]. Available from: <https://www.cancer.org.au/assets/pdf/exercise-for-people-living-with-cancer>

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